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TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 9208

INFO RUEHZN/EUROPEAN POLITICAL COLLECTIVE PRIORITY

UNCLAS ZAGREB 000261

SIPDIS

DEPARTMENT FOR EUR/SCE

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: ELAB ECON PGOV HR

SUBJECT: PUBLIC SECTOR STRIKE BEGINS, NEGOTIATIONS CONTINUE

REF: ZAGREB 252

¶1. Workers in public schools, universities, and research institutes went on strike May 13 over the six percent pay cut being implemented by the GOC under its revised budget (reftel). Union leaders and government representatives continued negotiating late into the night on May 12, but did not get close enough to an acceptable agreement for the unions to call off the strike. The negotiations resumed the morning of May 13. According to press reports, the parties are close to an agreement, though comments from government representatives have been more optimistic than those from union leaders. Neither party has released details of the potential agreement publicly.

¶2. According to public statements from the unions, more than eighty percent of workers at the relevant institutions have joined the strike. If negotiations fail to produce an agreement today, public-sector workers in healthcare, culture, and social services will join the strike tomorrow. Plans also remain in place for a public demonstration on the main square in Zagreb on May 16.

BRADTKE